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In honoring a commitment made in March to House GOP conservatives, Republican leaders face what could be a contentious floor debate when they bring up budget enforcement legislation as soon as the second week in June. The bill as drafted by **House Budget Chairman Nussle** would impose discretionary spending caps for five years and "pay/go" rules requiring offsets for new entitlement spending, triggering cuts to any spending above the limits except for sensitive programs such as Social Security and Medicare. But conservatives in the House -- led by **Reps. Jeb Hensarling**, R-Texas, and **Paul Ryan**, R-Wis. -- want to go further than the Nussle approach. Their bill would ignore pay/go and simply cap the growth of entitlement spending at the rate of inflation, triggering cuts if spending rises above a certain level, while also exempting sensitive programs. "Pay/go doesn't work," Ryan said in an interview. "Pay/go caps are always blown [through rule waivers], and the emphasis on pay/go rules focuses too much on getting more tax revenue" as GOP moderates and Democrats push to offset tax cuts as well as spending. Hensarling and Ryan are backed by outside interest groups such as Americans for Tax Reform and Citizens Against Government Waste -- which are scoring the vote for their legislative rankings.

Hensarling and Ryan aim to offer provisions of their bill on the floor, joining forces with moderates such as Rep. **Mark Kirk**, R-Ill., who has introduced similar legislation except that it would reinstate pay/go. "We agree with them on about 90 percent of the bill," Ryan said. He and Kirk said they were working on reaching out to moderate-to-conservative Blue Dog Democrats to form a majority coalition to strengthen the Nussle bill. And aides said there could be broad support for certain provisions, such as adopting a joint budget resolution backed by law, providing enhanced rescission authority to the president similar to a line-item veto power and making it harder to waive Budget Act points of order on the floor. But Blue Dogs and other Democrats probably will insist on amending the pay/go rule to include tax cuts, a move GOP leaders have tried mightily to suppress, even on non-binding motions.

Finally, backers of budget enforcement legislation must deal with the Appropriations Committee. **House Appropriations Chairman Young** recently met with his subcommittee "cardinals" to discuss the issue, and one consensus that emerged was that appropriators should be involved in the development of discretionary spending caps at the outset, rather than be forced to live with what they consider unrealistic spending targets. "We would participate in some kind of a cap, but we want the opportunity to discuss it," a senior Appropriations Committee aide said. "You need a [spending cap] that allows you to run a government." Kirk, a member of the Appropriations Committee, said he has discussed the matter with committee members and staff. He said: "The number one concern has to be entitlement spending," which

encompasses two-thirds of the federal budget, leaving appropriators with a smaller and smaller share each year.